These nodal officers hold periodic meetings to review the projects and take action to resolve the problems.

(c) A Committee of Secretaries has been constituted under Cabinet Secretary to address inter-ministerial and Centre-State issues such as land acquisition, utility shifting, environment approvals, clearance of Road Over Bridges.

(d) The procedure of issue of Land Acquisition notifications has now been simplified.

(e) To expedite the construction of Road Over Bridges, an officer of the Railways has been posted to National Highways Authority of India to coordinate with Ministry of Railways. Memorandum of Understanding has been signed with M/s IRCON International Limited for construction of some of the Road Over Bridges.

(f) Action has been taken against non-performing contractors and they are not allowed to bid for future projects unless they improve the performance in existing contracts.

(g) Steps have been taken to improve cash flow problems of contractors by granting interest bearing discretionary advance at the request of contractor, release of retention money against bank guarantee of equal amount, deferment of recovery of advances (on interest basis) and relaxation in minimum IPC amount.

Development of NH 47 and NH 17

1140. SHRI K.E. ISMAIL: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for neglecting Kerala, while Golden Quadrilateral Project and North-South and East-West Corridors were planned and executed;

(b) whether Government would not think of rectifying this by providing Keraia connectivity to these national proejcts by developing NH 47 and NH 17; and

(c) the proposals in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) No, Sir. There is no neglect of Kerala. The Salem-Kochi Spur of North-South Corridor has been provided to connect Kerala with North-South Corridor.

(b) and (c) The following stretches in Kerala are included in National Highways Development Project (NHDP) Phase-IIIA and Phase-IIIB.

NHDP Phase-IIIA

NH No.	Stretch under NHDP Phase-IIIA	Length (Km.)
47	Thiruvananthapuram-Kerala/Tamil Nadu Border	43
47	Cherthalai-Thiruvananthapuram	187
	TOTAL:	230

NHDP Phase-IIIB

NH No.	Stretch under NHDP Phase-IIIB	Length (Km.)
17	Karnataka/Kerala Border-Khozikode-Eddapally	451

In addition, under Cochin Port Connectivity Project Km. 348/382 to Km. 358/750 of NH-47 is being four laned.

Construction of alternate NH-31 in Sikkim

1141. SHRI O.T. LEPCHA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received a proposal from the State of Sikkim for construction of alternative National Highway to National Highway 31;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the action taken by Government so far in this regard; and

(d) by when the above proposal is likely to be cleared/implemented by Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Presumably, Hon'ble Member is referring to National Highway No. 31A. A proposal to construct new road from Melli to Rangpo bypassing the corresponding section of NH-31A has been received from Government of Sikkim. There is also a demand to construct entirely new highway from Nathula to Siliguri as an alternative of NH-31A. However, this demand has not been accepted due to resource constraints.